

Aid teachers * 'leftovers'

Many learning assistance teachers in the Greater Victoria school district are the "leftovers" of the teaching force, school trustee Mary Breer believes.

"The selection of learning assistance teachers has been inadequate," the trustee, who has been active in programs for educationally-handicapped students at the local, provincial and national level, and in founding the Victoria R.E.A.D. society, said in an interview.

"We have not established criteria for learning assistance teachers in the district and they are using leftover teachers, teachers with one or two years to retirement, whose qualifications in learning assistance are nil."

Mrs. Breer gave the district credit for its interest in learning assistance, but said "you get inadequate programs when you select inappropriate people."

The main reason for putting unqualified people into learning assistance is that the district's enrolment is declining, making it difficult to hire new and better qualified teachers because present teachers must be given jobs first.

But the district should establish better methods for selecting learning assistance teachers by encouraging interested teachers to apply for the positions and then providing training for them, since the education ministry has

not seen fit to direct university education faculties to provide better learning assistance programs, Mrs. Breer said.

"Learning assistance is too important not to select interested people."

Some of the learning assistance teachers in the district, other sources told the *Colonist*, were not only unqualified to teach students who have problems with reading, but admitted that they have no special skills in teaching reading at all, even to students with normal capability.